

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Deubrook School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2001-2002**

**Team Members:** Chris Sargent and Rita Pettigrew, Education Specialist

**Dates of On Site Visit:** January 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003

**Date of Report:** January 20, 2003

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- B – Instructional staff information
- C – Suspension and expulsion information
- D – Statewide assessment information
- E – Enrollment information
- F – Placement alternatives

- G – Disabling conditions
- H – Exiting information
- Parent survey
- Referrals
- Child find notice publications
- Comprehensive plan
- Yearly child find results

### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded that the district maintains a census of children birth through five years old. The lead special education teacher calls all parents of 3 through 5 year-olds to personally invite them to attend the screening and ask questions. The district has trained Student Outreach Squads (SOS) who intervene to assist students prior to referral. The school board hiring policy is to hire certified teachers as paraprofessionals. District staff uses results of the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) to look at curriculum and determine where it needs improvement. Through this process, a class was changed to address gaps in curriculum and to better prepare students for the state assessment.

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district has referral policies, procedures and a system for receiving documented referrals. The district has no private schools or students in private school placements. Relevant school data is used to analyze and review progress toward state performance goals and indicators. A data retreat will be held with the Curriculum Director of the Northeast Cooperative in the Spring. The district adheres to state guidelines for reporting students suspended, expelled, or have dropped out.

### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee identified the need to improve district wide training procedures for para educators.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice**

The Student Outreach Squad (SOS) was validated as a promising pre-referral strategy for the district. The process is based on the Masonic Model Student Assistance Program. The Student Outreach Squad is a team consisting of teachers, administrators, school counselors and other trained personnel. The purpose of this team is to address areas of concern such as attendance, academics, behavior and school health. The program is designed to be student centered, proactive and not reactive.

The Deubrook school board policy of hiring certified teachers to fill paraprofessional positions is considered a promising practice by the monitoring team.

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needs improvement for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Suspension and expulsion data
- Enrollment data
- Complaint data
- Hearing data
- Monitoring results
- Placement alternative data
- Early intervention exit information
- Number of students screened
- Preschool age
- School age
- Budget information
- Age at referral
- Personnel development education
- Personnel training
- Comprehensive plan
- Surveys

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district provides a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities. The district has had no suspensions or expulsions of students with special needs. The state tracking system is used to ensure proper reporting procedure.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Disabling condition data
- Exit information
- Placement by age data
- Placement by disabling condition data
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- SOS information
- Initial referral
- Parent and teacher report forms

### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded a multidisciplinary team written report was completed for all students evaluated for special education regardless of their disability category.

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded comprehensive evaluations are conducted and tests utilized are the most current, valid and reliable tests available. The district follows requirements set forth for testing instruments and all evaluations meet the state minimum requirements. The district adheres to state regulations and procedures regarding written notice and consent for evaluation. Documentation of eligibility determination is provided to parents.

### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded parent input in the evaluation process needs to be consistently documented.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needs improvement for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Complaint data

- Hearing data
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental right document
- Consent and prior notice forms
- Public awareness information
- Teacher file reviews
- FERPA disclosure

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district ensures parents receive notification of their rights. The district provides training and has policies and procedures for the appointment of a surrogate parent. Parents are fully informed for what activity consent is being sought. Parents also have the opportunity to inspect and review educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education. The district has policies and procedures to address complaint issues and due process hearing requests.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Student progress data
- Budget information
- Surveysreport form
- File reviews
- Personnel training
- Early intervention exit information
- Monitoring data

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the individual education program teams have appropriate team membership. Written notice to parents contains the required content. All students grade 7-12 are invited to attend their meetings. The district utilizes an appropriate individual education program (IEP) format and ensures each IEP contains the required content. IEPs are appropriately developed and in effect for each eligible student. Teachers and Para educators throughout the district use various inclusive strategies

to ensure the least restrictive environment for all students. Transition has been developed appropriately in student IEPs. Additional information regarding transition is noted below.

### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded goals and objectives are not included in the IEPs for students requiring counseling services.

### **Out of compliance**

The steering committee concluded the annual review and meeting date timeline for two students were not met and the present levels of performance need to be improved to include more specific skill based information.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirement for individual education program as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needs improvement for the individual education program as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Out of compliance**

The monitoring team could not validate annual review and meeting date timelines as an area of non-compliance and is considered to meet requirements. In all files reviewed, activities were conducted within the appropriate timelines.

#### 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.

Each student's individualized education program shall include statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the student. The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications, the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications must also be documented. In 4 files reviewed the location of services to be provided was written as, "regular classroom/resource room, written expression, 30 minutes/5 times a week." Interviews confirmed the amount of time a student may spend in the resource room could vary from 30 to 150 minutes per week by documenting multiple locations. The amount of time and location a student would be removed from the regular education setting is not specifically documented.

#### 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

#### 24:05:25:04. Evaluation procedures.

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the skill areas affected by the students identified disability. Present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. The monitoring team found a variety of inconsistencies regarding the relationship between functional evaluation and present levels of performance. In 4 files reviewed, the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum was not documented in the present levels of performance. In 2 files reviewed, the skill area affected by the disability was written language; however, functional assessment information was not gathered in that area therefore the present levels of performance did not link to evaluation. The "Career Decision-Making System" (CDMS) evaluation was administered as part of the comprehensive evaluation for 2 students of transition age. The present levels of performance for these students identified specific strengths and

needs in the area of transition; however, the strengths and needs were not linked to or developed from the CDMS evaluation results therefore the present levels of performance were not linked to evaluation.

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where special education and related services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Enrollment data
- Data on disabling conditions
- Placement by age data
- Placement by disabling conditions data
- Placement alternative data
- Monitoring data
- File reviews
- Surveys

#### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded the district's inclusion program was an area of promising practice.

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded policies and procedures are in effect to determine the least restrictive environment for students. Behavior intervention plans have been written for students as needed.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Promising practice**

The monitoring team agrees the inclusion program implemented in the district is an area of positive practice as concluded by the steering committee. The district inclusion program began in 1994 through an SDSU grant designed to train teachers on how to implement inclusive education strategies in their classrooms. The original team consisted of 4 regular education teachers, the special education teacher and the high school principal. World history and physical science were the first two classes to implement the program. The program has evolved to include staff from grades 7 through 12 and a variety of core and elective classes.

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.